

**CLAIM AMENDMENTS:**

No changes are made to the claims at this time.

**CLAIMS:**

1. (previously amended): In an electrical system of power distribution for use with railroad passenger cars having a receptacle connector that includes an elastomeric lip, the combination with said receptacle connector of a support ring embedded in the elastomeric lip and wherein said support ring includes a raised portion that extends around at least a portion of the circumference thereof.

2. (previously amended): A rigid support ring molded into an elastomeric connector lip of a railroad receptacle connector, comprising:

(a) means for providing a rigid support ring adapted for insertion into said elastomeric connector; and

(b) wherein said support ring includes at least one edge thereof that includes an outer radius and wherein said support ring includes a raised portion that extends around at least a portion of said outer radius along a circumference thereof.

4. (previously amended): A method for forming an elastomeric receptacle connector for use in supplying electrical power to a railroad car, which comprises the steps of:

(a) placing a support ring proximate a lip of said receptacle connector wherein said support ring includes a raised portion that extends around at least a portion of a circumference thereof: and

(b) surrounding at least a portion of said support ring with an elastomer.

5. (previously added): A rigid support ring molded into an elastomeric connector lip of a railroad receptacle connector, comprising:

(a) means for providing a rigid support ring adapted for insertion into said elastomeric connector;

(b) wherein said support ring includes at least one surface thereof that includes an outer radius and wherein said support ring includes a raised portion

that extends around at least a portion of said outer radius along an outer circumference thereof; and

(c) wherein when said support ring is disposed in said elastomeric connector, said support ring is surrounded by an elastomer on an inside circumference, on both of a pair of sides that are generally perpendicular with respect to said inside circumference, and wherein said support ring is surrounded by said elastomer on said outer circumference where said raised portion is absent.